

Remarks/Arguments

The Rejection of Claims 2, 3, 5, 7, 17, and 19 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner rejected Claims 2, 3, 5, 7, 17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 3,215,442 (Papenguth). Applicants traverse the rejection as follows.

Papenguth does not teach the protective coating recited in Claim 2

Amended Claim 2 recites: "...wherein the at least one protective layer (4) covers at least a portion of the base ring (2), said portion including said first and second surfaces and said first, second, third, and fourth planar surfaces, wherein said first and second planar surfaces extend radially inward from said center section and said portion connects said first and second planar surfaces," In contrast, assuming *arguendo* that element 11 is analogous to the protective coating recited in Claim 2, element 11 at most covers the third and fourth planar surfaces recited in Claim 2 and may cover a portion of the first and second surfaces (of the center section).

Papenguth does not teach all the elements of Claim 2; therefore, Claim 2 is novel with respect to Papenguth. Claims 3, 5, 7, 17, and 19, dependent from Claim 2, enjoy the same distinction with respect to the cited reference.

Applicants courteously request that the rejection be removed.

The Rejection of Claims 4, 8, 9, 11-13, 15, and 20 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claims 4, 8, 9, 11-13, 15, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 3,215,442 (Papenguth). Applicants traverse the rejection as follows.

Applicants have shown that Papenguth fails to teach all the elements of Claim 2. Papenguth also fails to suggest or motivate all the elements of Claim 2, in particular the protective coating recited in amended Claim 2; therefore, Claim 2 is patentable over Papenguth. Claims 4, 8, 9, 11-13, 15, and 20, dependent from Claim 2, enjoy the same distinction with respect to the cited reference.

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Applicants courteously request that the rejection be removed.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is now in condition for examination on the merits, which action is courteously requested. The Examiner is invited and encouraged to contact the undersigned agent of record if such contact will facilitate an efficient examination and allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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